THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI JASWANT SINGH): (a) to (c) Government conveyed the anguish and deep anger of the Indian people to the Foreign Minister of Pakistan during his visit to Delhi on June 12,1999. Government underlined that these acts constitute a gross violation of the Geneva Convention, and demanded of Pakistan that the guilty be identified and punished.

The attention of the international community was drawn to these brutal acts of Pakistan including through our statement to the UN General Assembly in New York on September 22, 1999. Government will continue to take up the matter in appropriate international forums.

Passport Office at Siliguri

2370. SHRI DAWA LAMA: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to State:

(a) whether there is any proposal to open a Passport Office at Siliguri; and

(b) if so, the time-frame thereof?

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI JASWANT SINGH): (a) and (b) No, Sir. However, a proposal to open a Passport Application Collection Centre at Siliguri is under the consideration of the Government.

Indian fishermen in Pakistani jails

2371. SHRI N. THALAVAI SUNDARAM: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to State:

(a) whether it is a fact that 19 fishermen from Kanyakumari Districts of Tamil Nadu are in Pakistani jails; and

(b) if so, what steps are being taken by Government for the early release of the Indian Fishermen from Pakistani jails?